

NEWS RELEASE



STATE OF ALABAMA
Department of Industrial
Relations
News For Immediate Release
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Alabama December Unemployment Rate Up Slightly

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA, January 21, 2005 Alabama's unemployment rate of 5.4 percent in December edged up slightly from the November jobless rate of 5.2 percent, but was well below the 5.8 percent recorded a year ago. December's rate represented 117,800 unemployed persons, compared to 126,100 unemployed in December 2003. There were 112,000 unemployed Alabamians in November.

"Although December's rate is slightly higher, the rate had declined for the previous three months and it appears that 2004 will show an improvement overall from 2003," says Phyllis Kennedy, director of the Alabama Department of Industrial Relations. "The official average unemployment rate for 2004 is expected to be published in early March after benchmarking of statistical data is complete."

The comparable national unemployment rate for December was also 5.4 percent, unchanged from the November rate, and below the year-ago rate of 5.7 percent.

Over the year, there was a net gain of 21,100 jobs in wage and salary employment looking at data from December 2003 compared with data from December 2004. The majority of the annual growth occurred in construction (+7,900); followed by professional and business services (+5,400); trade, transportation and utilities (+3,000); manufacturing (+2,700); leisure and hospitality (+1,800); and educational and health services (+1,700). The greatest losses were recorded in information (-1,300) and financial activities (-1,200).

County unemployment rates in December ranged from a low of 2.0 percent in Shelby county to 15.2 percent in Wilcox County.

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County unemployment rates, Metropolitan Area Unemployment Rates, and an Alabama map of county unemployment rates, are available at: <http://dir.alabama.gov>. Click on "Alabama Labor Market Information Division" under "Quick Links" and follow prompts.